

HISTORIC AND HEROIC ACTS OF "THE OLD BA
CONFERENCE"

By
Methodist Episcopal Church

Historic and Heroic Acts
OF
“The Old Baltimore Conference”

FOREWORD

"We were now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessing of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavored, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. The man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."—SAMUEL JOHNSON, "Journey to the Western Isles."

Thus spoke with truth and eloquence a man robust and great. Not natural scenery, but the deliberate sacrifice for reasoned conviction is the beauty that moves men most. Columba and his colleagues by patient continuance in well doing kindled on Iona a light that brightened Scotland, and to this day little Iona warms the heart of the traveler who comes to its shores. Patriotism feeds its vigor on the plain of Marathon, where once were poised in doubtful balance the world's best hopes. There, that liberty and civilization might live, Callimachus and his comrades died.

Sixty years ago the men of the Baltimore Conference were tried as by fire, and nobly, though not without some groans, did they stand the test. The flames lit up their manhood and revealed pure gold. They were both wise and good, not better and more courageous than others; but were so situated, so encompassed, so beset with difficulties, that they were forced to act and in their action laid bare their heroic souls.

The Conference faced complications perhaps unique in Methodism. More currents, diverse and strong, swept through that Conference than through any other. In its territory were included parts of four States—Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia. In these States, customs, indeed laws, differed. There heated and fierce sentiments struggled for the mastery. To hold its ground and do its work the Conference was forced to think intently and long, to be loving and yet firm, to maintain its balance with calmness and courage, to find and to follow the will of God. Entanglements, difficulties, perplexities, dangers, God uses these to lead serious men, able men, good men into the light. Not by the undisturbed, unbeset, quiet thinker is the difficulty seen and solved. Not smothered in lace, but

rocking in fire is the cradle of truth to be found. While scorched by the heat of contending Corinthian factions Paul wrote his Psalm of Love, and amid the discords of error and denial he wrote the Oratorio of the Resurrection. The wrestler in the night comes from the contest a limping victor crowned with the wreath of a God-given name. Let us not be so concerned with the limp in his leg that we fail to see the light in his soul.

Over the territory of this Conference armies marched and fought, while camp followers plied their trade. There was Manassas, the Shenandoah Valley, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and but recently Gettysburg. When brothers fight they light a burning fiery furnace. In that war brothers fought. In 1866 the country was a desolation and Reconstruction had entered on its Reign of Terror. The fires had ceased to burn only because there were no more mills and barns and homes to feed its flames. Crows fled in hunger from fields that once bloomed in plenteous harvests. While children hunted for the crumb which fell from the poor man's table, it is small wonder that some bitter words fell from the lips of the righteous Job suffering from the provocation of the friends of his prosperous days. Charity is a jewel that seldom finds place in the crown of the victor.

These records are republished not only to acquaint the sons with the history of their fathers, but also, because they contain a great truth now obscured, a truth needing proclamation in this our troubled day.

The men of the Baltimore Conference saw a truth now in eclipse. They saw that our Lord would not, and that His Church should not, be forced to become entangled in political, or even in civil affairs. He fed the exhausted, hungry thousands, but He resisted them and left them when He perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a king. He laid down the eternal and immutable principles of morality, honesty, duty, love, but He refused to be a judge or even a divider among the people. More than once He said that He did not come to judge the world, but to save it. If the Head of the Church refused to be drawn into such matters, can the Church, His body, expect to find there its legitimate sphere of action? In every age men have striven, some ignorantly and honestly, some knowingly, to use our Lord and His Church to fulfill their own ends. It is certain that our Lord will not thus be used. Not a few brethren, able, earnest, godly, seem to

suppose that because a question involves morals it therefore comes within the legitimate sphere of the Church, as the Church, of a Conference in its Conference capacity. If that were true the functions of Church and State would merge, for every affective relation between any two persons is moral. These Baltimore Conference brethren of the sixties were illuminated to see and empowered with courage to declare that the sphere of Caesar was not the sphere of the Lord's Church, that between temporal and spiritual sovereignty there exists a deep and broad distinction, and that while the two are not opposed they do not merge. He is a poor, or at least an ignorant Christian who does not take his Christian principles into all departments of his life, politics included; but he should not try to take the Church as the Church into politics, even though he may show that the political question is a moral question. While civil and spiritual duties should not and for the true Christian cannot conflict, political circumstances do not quench, they should not even compromise his spiritual life.

These men of the Baltimore Conference did not forget those words of the Lord Jesus, spoken as He entered into the shadow of the cross: "My kingdom is not of this world." It does not have its origin in civil or in any earthly forces, never has it found, nor ever will it find in those forces its support. As citizens, especially American citizens, we can meet together and band together and work together for every righteous cause. Can we rightly put the Church as the Church of God, a Conference in its Conference capacity, (that is, an organ of the Church of God), into politics, or into any sphere other than the spiritual sphere?

From infancy the men of the Baltimore Conference were known to me, not a few of them known personally and well. Often by my father's fireside in my presence what they did and why they did it was discussed. From my memory their triumphant prayers have not faded. Who that ever heard Norval Wilson pray can forget it? Like Jacob he halted on his thigh, and like Jacob he was a prince who had power with God and with men, and prevailed. He had known my Mother from her birth, lived close by and came often to our home, was to her always gracious and as tender as a father. When he said Amen, Mother's cheeks were always wet, and for us all the house was near to heaven.

The fame of the act does not make the hero, but the daring, the nobility, the involved and endangered and protected prin-

ciple, and the sacrifice of the man. These men, more than the men of the Stonewall Brigade, living and limping all around me and shining in the glory of their deeds, were the heroes of my youth. They are heroes with me now. From the time I was old enough to understand their principles, I saw that in the main they were true, especially that "politico-ecclesiastical confederations" were false. Through the passing years I have kept this faith, and by God's help will keep it to the end. How gloriously, how heroically, how sacrificially, with what labor, these men sought the truth and sold their all to buy it!

"Truth indeed came once into the world with her Divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on; but when He ascended, and His Apostles after Him were laid asleep, there straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of truth, such as dost appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection."

A brother thought it would advance the cause of God to republish these papers. He wrote me of his purpose, and asked me to prepare a foreword. This request explains my slight connection with this publication.

COLLINS DENNY.

Richmond, Virginia.

I

ACTION IN 1861.

The printed Minutes of the Baltimore Annual Conference for 1861 contain the following papers:

MEMBERS OF THE "PEACE CONFERENCE."

The following members were appointed a "Peace Conference" at the Conference held in Staunton, Virginia on the ninth day, Friday morning, March 22nd, 1861: B. F. Brooke, J. Landstreet, S. Regester, W. B. Edwards, J. Lanahan, N. J. B. Morgan—"two brethren representing each of three plans read to the Conference." (Minutes 1861, p. 16).

REPORT OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Their report, adopted unanimously, was as follows:

"The Committee to whom was referred the several plans which have been proposed in view of the action of the last General Conference on Slavery, report:

1. That they are not able to agree upon any basis of action recommended by the several reports. But for the continuance of peace and brotherly-kindness among us as a Conference, do recommend:

1. That the majority pass such plan as in their judgment may be considered best calculated to meet the necessities under which we are placed, without the concurrence of the minority.

2. And that for the purpose of bringing before the Church the true position occupied by the minority, they be permitted to enter such protest as they may deem proper, upon the Journal of the Conference, without opposition from the majority; and that both parties receive their appointments in the usual way from the Bishops.

3. And for the purpose of calming the agitation of the Church, that controversy on the subject, during the year ensuing, be prohibited in the Baltimore Christian Advocate, and the Publishing Committee be, and hereby is so instructed.

4. That this Conference disclaim any imputation of the motives of the brethren who feel constrained to protest against the

action of the majority as to the soundness of their views on the subject of slavery, and their fidelity to the interests and peace of this Conference.

5. That after the determination of this question by the Conference, a committee of nine be appointed—four from the minority, and four from the majority, to be elected by this body, and one to be selected by the Bishop for consultation during the year, with the view of securing greater harmony of sentiment and feeling hereafter." (Op. cit. pgs. 17, 44).

THE PROTEST OF THE CONFERENCE AGAINST THE ACTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The following protest was adopted by the Conference March 23rd:

"Whereas, The late General Conference, at its session held in May last, in the city of Buffalo, in the State of New York, did enact almost an entirely New Chapter on the subject of Slavery, and in its pastoral address declare it to be the doctrine of the church on said subject, and, whereas, in the administration of Discipline by the executive officers of said General Conference, the doctrine contained in said Chapter has been illustrated and enforced in the presiding Bishop's refusal to ordain to the office of Elder, in the church of God, a member of our own body, because he could not in judgment and conscience subscribe to the dogma laid down in said Chapter; the Baltimore Conference, in Conference assembled, feels imperatively called upon to express its views, and solemnly, and in the fear of God, to enter its protest against the whole procedure, and to point out the means and mode of redress.

Therefore, resolved, That we do hereby request and most earnestly enforce upon the consideration of the Presiding Bishop of this Conference, the propriety of putting to vote and of admitting to record on the journals of this Conference, this our solemn protest in defence of our just and equal rights, as an organic body in the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church in these United States.

ACTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

1st. We protest against the action of the late General Conference as above referred to, because of its unconstitutionality,

the Annual Conferences never having delegated to the said General Conference the power to enact doctrines, either of faith or morals, nor according to its own records, strictly legislative powers, but simply to make "rules and regulations for the church" under certain well defined limitations and restrictions, among which is one forbidding the General Conference "to revoke, alter or change our Articles of Religion, or to establish any new standards or rules of Doctrine," contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

Unmindful of these constitutional obligations, and reckless as to consequences, and in the face of solemn entreaty on the part of our own Delegates and the Delegates of other Annual Conferences, the said General Conference did assume strictly legislative powers, and enact a New Chapter on Slavery, having all the form and force of Doctrine, and in part predicated upon a false standard, and thereby violated the first restrictive article of the Constitution of the Church, both in its spirit and letter, as well as transcend the general grant of power.

ACTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE DESTRUCTIVE OF THE ORGANIC LAW.

2nd. We protest against the action of said General Conference, because it destroyed the organic law of the Constitution of the Church by which the General Conference held its existence. It is, we believe, a well-defined principle in constitutional law, that if a delegated body such as the late General Conference was, violates the organic law of its own existence, it not only vitiates its own acts, but destroys itself, unless there is pointed out in the Constitution some way by which its errors can be corrected. There is no such way pointed out in the Constitution of our church, and hence the church in such a case as has happened, is without redress, unless by a resort to the original source, whence the delegated body derived its powers; if this be so, then the late General Conference, by its unconstitutional action, did not only vitiate all its acts subsequent to the passage of the obnoxious measure complained of, but all acts, of whatever particular kind, designed to have a prospective bearing upon the action of the church itself, and precludes the idea of another delegated General Conference, the Constitutional existence of which we have already shown to have been destroyed by the act of the body itself. Much more might be said here, but we waive its discussion.

ACTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE DESTROYED UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

3d. We protest against the action of said Conference, upon the ground that it destroyed the unity of the church, so far as any act on its part could, for it never had power wholly to break asunder the connectional ties of the church. It did so, we admit, so far as the General Conference was a bond of connection, and those institutions of the church dependent upon it, for their organism; and hence the wide spread ruin of its unconstitutional legislation, which none would more deeply deplore than ourselves, but for the opportunity it affords of putting a check to the fanatical spirit that has swept over the land with the most disastrous consequences, and which can only be stopped by the interposition of Providence. The great feature in the unity of the church still remains, viz: The pastoral care and oversight of the General Superintendents—but this can only continue so long as they shall wisely and prudently fulfill the functions of their office, and not lend their aid to entirely rend the body of Christ, which is the Church.

DESTROYED JURISDICTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OVER THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

This act of the General Conference has destroyed its jurisdiction over the Annual Conferences, no one of which is bound by any of its legislative enactments contained in the Discipline or elsewhere, nor by that edition of the Discipline printed and circulated by its violated authority; hence we do not think that any act of repudiation is necessary on our part, as we do most heartily and fully in this, our protest, disavow and disapprove of the enactment of said General Conference, on the subject of Slavery, and declare herein our purpose to act in the administration of the Discipline, as though said action had never been passed, and protest at the same time that the edition of the Discipline published by authority of the late General Conference, is of no force or effect whatsoever, only as it derives effect from its original sources and perpetuated in all its integrity up to the year 1856.

FALSE CHARACTER OF THE DOGMA INCULCATED

4th. We protest against the action of said General Conference, because of the false and heterodox character of the dogma in-

culcated in the chapter on Slavery, being not only untaught in the Sacred Scriptures, but contrary thereto and the admonition based upon it, is altogether out of place and unbecoming to the highest church council known to our economy and the members of the church are under no obligation to regard it.

ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION OF GENERAL RULES

5th. We protest against the said action of the late General Conference, because they have given an erroneous and schismatic interpretation of one of the General Rules, or rather the preface to one of the sections of the General Rules, under which there is a rule which has always allowed members of the Church to hold slaves, and only prohibits the traffic, whatever may be the legitimate meaning of that clause; and have by their false interpretation passed a censure on many pious members of our Church holding slaves, and slandered the memories of many of the pious dead in our own, and former times, whose names still remain as a precious ointment, and whose praise has been in all the churches.

BARS RECEPTION OF MEMBERS, AND ORDINATION OF PREACHERS

6th. We protest against the action of said Conference, because said Chapter on Slavery acts as a bar against the reception of members into the Church, as will appear by a reference to the conditions upon which members are to be received into the Church, as found in the Discipline, and, hence must be regarded at least by implication, as a violation of the fourth restrictive article of the Constitution of the Church. And further, the said Chapter does act as a bar to the ordination of deacons and elders in the Church, whether local or traveling, as is evident by the practice of the Episcopacy, and recited in the preamble to this protest; and we may further remark, acts as a bar against the ordination of a Bishop, did we hold that said edition of the Discipline had any legal existence. These are some, but not all the reasons which might be embodied in this our protest; but to save our beloved Church and Methodism from further reproach, we will cease to enumerate them.

APPEAL TO THE BISHOPS

And now the question arises what can be done to correct the wrong which has been perpetrated on the whole Church and

particularly those portions of it which lie within the Slaveholding States. Our appeal is first to the Bishops of the Church. The circumstances which surround us, should be seriously considered by them, and there are most just and legal reasons set forth in this protest, which demand their most careful and thorough investigation. As very much depends upon their decision whether we shall still be bound together by fraternal ties or rent asunder by internal strife, and become a reproach to the cause of Christ, rather than a blessing to our fellow-men, for whose salvation we profess to labor.

APPEAL TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCES

We make our appeal also to our sister Annual Conferences whose delegates have broken down the constitution of our church, and occasioned so much contention and ill feeling among brethren. Upon these Conferences mainly depends the fact, whether we shall again be a united people and a united church. If they shall disavow the act of their delegates in the late General Conference, and disavow the action of the said General Conference itself, and give us such assurances as the case demands for the protection of all our rights as a Conference and the rights of our members, whether slaveholders or non-slaveholders, and particularly that this unholy agitation on the subject of Slavery shall cease, then, and not until then, will we negotiate in regard to a future union. Our appeal is also to our sister Conferences whose delegates nobly stood up in the defence of our rights, but who were over-ruled by a majority who little understood the subject upon which they assumed to legislate, and drove the plough-share of destruction through the very heart of Methodism. Will our brethren of these Conferences and parts of Conferences alike wronged with us, come to the rescue and save the bleeding church of Christ? If so, all may yet be well, but if not, then we will stand alone; and after having made our appeal, and having now pursued the only course that could be pursued compatible with the gravity of the case, and to avoid litigation of any kind, we shall await in hope and prayer that the unity of the church may yet be saved, and the wounds of our bleeding Zion healed. But if all means should fail to restore the bonds that have been broken, and make us one again, then upon others must rest the responsibility, and we shall then feel fully authorized to declare that we are the only true and legitimate branch of the M. E. Church in these United States, and shall defend our

culcated in the chapter on Slavery, being not only untaught in the Sacred Scriptures, but contrary thereto and the admonition based upon it, is altogether out of place and unbecoming to the highest church council known to our economy and the members of the church are under no obligation to regard it.

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5th. We protest against the said action of the late General Conference, because they have given an erroneous and schismatic interpretation of one of the General Rules, or rather the preface to one of the sections of the General Rules, under which there is a rule which has always allowed members of the Church to hold slaves, and only prohibits the traffic, whatever may be the legitimate meaning of that clause; and have by their false interpretation passed a censure on many pious members of our Church holding slaves, and slandered the memories of many of the pious dead in our own, and former times, whose names still remain as a precious ointment, and whose praise has been in all the churches.

BARS RECEPTION OF MEMBERS, AND ORDINATION OF PREACHERS

6th. We protest against the action of said Conference, because said Chapter on Slavery acts as a bar against the reception of members into the Church, as will appear by a reference to the conditions upon which members are to be received into the Church, as found in the Discipline, and, hence must be regarded at least by implication, as a violation of the fourth restrictive article of the Constitution of the Church. And further, the said Chapter does act as a bar to the ordination of deacons and elders in the Church, whether local or traveling, as is evident by the practice of the Episcopacy, and recited in the preamble to this protest; and we may further remark, acts as a bar against the ordination of a Bishop, did we hold that said edition of the Discipline had any legal existence. These are some, but not all the reasons which might be embodied in this our protest; but to save our beloved Church and Methodism from further reproach, we will cease to enumerate them.

APPEAL TO THE BISHOPS

And now the question arises what can be done to correct the wrong which has been perpetrated on the whole Church and

master and slave. The people now demand a fulfillment of these pledges.

No sufficient reason can be given for the maintenance of a connection which we are of opinion is not desired by a large majority of our Northern Brethren, except upon terms that would prove our ruin.

We would like to accord to the views of many of our brethren to await the call of an extra session of the General Conference in 1862, did we see any hope of said session being held or any relief from the action of a General Conference. If, however, it would unite all our preachers and people in combined action by waiting until December 4, 1861, to give the other Conferences an opportunity to declare the action of the late General Conference unconstitutional, and to concur with us in the proposed action, we would wait until said date.

We do not pretend to conceal that whatever course you may take to allay the strife and excitement amongst us will be involved in some difficulty. After due deliberation, therefore, we have resolved to ask our preachers of the Baltimore Annual Conference, that, for the sake of quiet within our borders—for the sake of the preaching of the Gospel, that it may find ready entrance among us, for the ending of controversy, and to promote the best interests of Methodism and religion, they redeem the pledges given time after time to our people and sunder a connection—now merely nominal—one which is full of strife and positive death to all hopes of peace or the advancement of Christianity in our midst, in the manner prescribed in the following resolutions:

1st. Resolved, That the Baltimore Annual Conference ought at its present session to declare that the General Conference of the M. E. Church, held at Buffalo in May last by its unconstitutional action has sundered the ecclesiastical relation which has hitherto held us together as one Church, and that the Baltimore Annual Conference does not and cannot longer recognize its connection with this jurisdiction.

2nd. Resolved, That the Baltimore Annual Conference do assert that the said General Conference has, by its said action, violated the first restrictive rule, which declares the General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Article or Religion, nor establish any new standard or rule of doctrine, contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine, and thereby has separated the several Annual Conferences represented therein and concurring in such action from the Baltimore and other non-concurring Conferences, and that the Baltimore and other non-concurring Conferences constitute the M. E. Church proper, and may exercise all the rights, duties, and powers appertaining properly to their position as such.

3rd. Resolved, That, nevertheless, if in accordance with the spirit of the foregoing preamble three-fourths of the several Annual Conferences, to be held prior to December 4, 1861, seeing the great wrong and injury done to the Baltimore and other border

rights by all proper and legal means, and are willing to abide the decisions of the future as to the righteousness of our cause. And may God defend the right." (op. cit. pp. 18, 44-47).

NORVAL WILSON'S PROPOSITION

The following Preamble and Resolutions, known as Norval Wilson's Proposition were adopted March 23:

Action of the Baltimore Conference in session at Staunton, Virginia, March 13-25, 1861.

PREAMBLE

1st. "WHEREAS, a memorial has been sent to this Conference from a Convention of Laymen, held in the city of Baltimore, Dec. 5th, 1860, representing a large majority of the Laity of our Church, and like papers from other sources asking this Conference to take such action as will give quiet to our people, and remove all obstructions to the preaching of the Gospel among them by the preachers of this Conference.

2nd. "And whereas a similar memorial from the Convention of Laymen, representing the membership of the M. E. Church, under a call of the Presiding Elders and an equal number of Laymen, convened in Staunton, March 13, 1861, for the purpose of devising some harmonious plan of action to be pursued by the Ministry and Laity of this Conference in relation to the offensive change of the Discipline of said Methodist Episcopal Church on the subject of Slavery, has reached the following conclusions, and presented the same for our most favorable consideration, viz:

Whereas The late General Conference, which assembled at Buffalo, substituted without proper authority an entirely New Chapter on the subject of slaveholding, making, in the opinion of many of our people, a new rule of doctrine, namely, that slavery is a sin, contrary to the first restrictive rule, and therefore virtually making non-slaveholding a test of membership, and utterly closing all doors of entrance to the people against the preachers of your Conference, if they endorse or submit to it.

The Baltimore Conference has by unanimous vote, again and again assured our people, in the midst of strife engendered by this agitation, that it disclaimed having the least sympathy with abolitionists; that, on the contrary, it was determined not to hold connection with any ecclesiastical body that made non-slaveholding a condition of membership in the Church, and that it was opposed to any inquisition into the motives underlying the relation of

Annual Conferences to be held prior to the next session of the Annual Conference, seeing the great wrong and injury done to the Baltimore and other Conferences shall disavow the act of their delegates and the action of the late General Conference on the subject of slavery, and shall unite in a demand that the most thorough and satisfactory redress shall be given and shall instruct their delegates so to vote in any convention that may be called for the purpose of a more perfect union,—

First—By abrogating the New Chapter.

Second—By transferring the subject of slavery to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Annual Conferences where it exists.

Third—That a fair proportion of the periodicals of the Church be placed under the charge and direction of said Conferences. **THEN, AND NOT UNTIL THEN**, will we reunite with them in the organization of another General Conference.

WHY THIS ACTION WAS TAKEN

3rd. Resolved, That this Conference has taken the action expressed in the above resolutions, after much long suffering and reproach, to give freedom to our Preachers in the discharge of their duties in our territory, and cannot refrain from expressing the hope that the day may speedily come when agitation and strife shall have ceased among us, and the great Methodist family, East, West, North and South, be again united in the common effort which engaged the hearts and lives of our fathers—that of spreading Scriptural Holiness all over the land.

COMMITTEE TO PREPARE PASTORAL LETTER

4th. That a committee of seven consisting of S. Regester, J. S. Martin, S. S. Roszell, E. R. Veitch, W. G. Eggleston, Norval Wilson and T. H. W. Munroe, be appointed to prepare a pastoral letter for our people, setting forth the grounds and aims of the action.

All of which is respectfully submitted. (Op. cit. pp. 18-20, 47-50).

The vote on these resolutions were as follows: First Resolution, Ayes 87, Noes 1, Declined to vote 41, Reserved their votes 3. The vote on the second resolution "prevailed." The third resolution was "adopted by a rising vote: Affirmative 102, Negative 1. (op. cit. pp. 18-20, 47-50).

Conferences, shall unite in a demand that the most thorough and satisfactory redress shall be given, and shall instruct their delegates so to vote in the General Conference: First, The abrogation of the New Chapter. Second, By ignoring the whole subject of Slavery in the Discipline. Third, That a fair proportion of the periodicals of the Church be placed under the charge and direction of said Conferences. Then, and not until then, will we reunite with them in the bonds of Church fellowship.

3rd. And whereas this Conference is cognizant of the facts set forth in these memorials, that sixteen years of contention and strife within our borders, brought about by the continual agitation of the slavery question, has retarded the preaching of the Gospel, hindered our cooperation in the great missionary and other enterprises of the Church, and materially checked the growth of Methodism in a great part of our territory;

4th. And whereas we the preachers of the Baltimore Annual Conference, feeling that we are called to preach the Gospel alone, and that not of strife and contention but of peace;

5th. And whereas, the late General Conference at Buffalo, by its New Chapter on Slavery, has added additional burdens which we cannot bear, placed obstructions in our way, in the forms of doctrines and duties which we all know will alienate the hearts of the people from us, and render us obnoxious to civil penalty and censure, and have wantonly aspersed the memory of our pious dead, by representing them as having lived and died in sin.

RESOLUTIONS—GENERAL CONFERENCE HAS SUND- ERED RELATION WITH BALTIMORE CONFERENCE

THEREFORE, 1st, Be it Resolved by the Baltimore Annual Conference, in Conference assembled, That we hereby declare that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held at Buffalo, in May, 1860, by its unconstitutional action has sundered the ecclesiastical relation which has hitherto bound us together as one Church, so far as any act of theirs could do so. That we will not longer submit to the jurisdiction of said General Conference, but hereby declare ourselves separate and independent of it, still claiming to be, notwithstanding, an integral part of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

TERMS OF REUNION

2nd. Resolved, That nevertheless, if in accordance with the spirit of the foregoing preamble, three fourths of the several

of legislation in the general councils of the Church. We ask a call of an extra session of the General Conference in 1862; and an expression by the Annual Conferences of their approval or disapproval of the above terms of relief which our circumstances demand; and assure our people, that by the tone of that response, and that of our sister sympathizing Conferences, especially in slave territory, our course at our next session shall be controlled, whether it be further negotiation, or immediate separation.

In Christian hope that these assurances will bring "rest to the Churches" during the present year, we are, etc." (op. cit. pp. 23, 44, 50, 51).

REQUEST THAT THE BISHOPS ACT

The following resolutions were adopted:

"Resolved by the Baltimore Annual Conference, in Conference assembled, That we do hereby most respectfully submit to the Bishops of our Church the propriety and necessity, under existing circumstances, of communicating to the Secretary of this Conference, some time previous to its next session, their determinations in regard to the questions that have arisen in this Conference, at its present session, touching the action of the late General Conference on the subject of Slavery, as we regard a decision on their part as essential to our interests as an organized body in the M. E. Church in these United States."

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SECRETARY

"Resolved, That the Secretary of this Conference be, and he is hereby directed to communicate through the Presiding Bishops of the several Annual Conferences, at their next sessions, copies of the protest of this Conference against the action of the late General Conference on the subject of Slavery, and request them to lay said protest before said Annual Conferences."

"Resolved, That the Secretary be requested to furnish copies of the resolution offered by G. W. Israel and S. S. Roszell, and adopted, relating to the determinations of the Bishops in regard to the questions that have arisen in this Conference, to the said Bishops." (op. cit. pp. 21, 22.)

PROTEST OF THE MINORITY

The following Protest of the Minority, signed by thirty preachers, was spread on the Minutes:

OBJECTION TO MODE OF RELIEF

"We, the undersigned, members of the Baltimore Annual Conference, differing in opinion with a majority of our brethren in regard to the mode of obtaining relief from the evils which have been entailed upon us by the action of the late General Conference upon the subject of Slavery, Protest against the course which they have adopted:

IT IS AN APPEAL TO REVOLUTION

1st. Because it is an appeal to revolution for redress, before the constitutional means have been tried, much less exhausted.

FAILS TO CONSULT OTHER NONCONCURRING CONFERENCES

2nd. Because it shapes our course without consultation with other nonconcurring Conferences, all of whom have strong claims upon our fraternity, and some, in slave territory, will be materially affected, and, probably, prejudiced in their interests thereby.

BECAUSE IT WILL GIVE STRENGTH TO POLITICAL SECESSIONISTS

3rd. Because the act is done and announced within the bosom of two States, which are now the custodians of the Federal Union, and will strengthen the hands of political secessionists and carry dismay to the hearts of all who would preserve our National inheritance.

DIFFERENCE ONLY IN MODE OF RELIEF

But it is of the mode of obtaining relief from our troubles alone in which we differ with our brethren.

AGREEMENTS WITH MAJORITY

We, too, protest against the "New Chapter;" we protest against the continuance of the subject of slavery, as a question

tion of members into the Church, as well as to the ordination of ministers as practiced among us. These points we need not elaborate, inasmuch as they are fully set forth in the "PROTEST" which was "adopted as the sense and judgment of the Baltimore Annual Conference."

ACTION OF LAYMEN'S CONVENTIONS AND QUARTERLY CONFERENCES

In view of these facts, and also of the solemn pledges given at our last session, your ministers felt that they were loudly called to meet the crisis that was upon them, and to do this with intelligent deliberation and in the fear of God, was their unflinching purpose. They felt called upon still further, by the expression of sentiment as given by the laity of the Conference. In the Laymen's Convention, which met in Baltimore in December last, and also in the meeting held in Light Street Church in the same city, as well as in many Quarterly Conferences and Society Meetings, there had been a general agreement upon several points: viz, 1. The untruthfulness of the Chapter. 2. The fixed and solemn purpose to reject it. 3. In the judgment they expressed that the whole subject of slavery should be placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Annual Conferences, where it exists, and that the agitation upon the subject should cease. In these views the Laymen's Convention, which met in Staunton during the session of our Conference, most heartily concurred.

AGREEMENT OF PREACHERS AND LAYMEN IN DECLARING INDEPENDENCE

An ample interchange of views made it apparent that upon the several points above named, the entire Conference was, heart and soul, one with our brethren of the laity—whatever differences of opinion may have existed as to the time and mode of our action. The action of the Conference in accordance with the ground taken in the "PROTEST," we conceive to be the legitimate one; and will effectually secure our rights should necessity carry our cause before the civil courts for adjudication. This action declares, "that we will no longer submit to the jurisdiction of the General Conference," held at Buffalo, and that we are "separate and independent of it." That separation is not made dependent upon any condition prescribed, but is positive and entire.

PASTORAL LETTER

Dearly Beloved Brethren:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GROUND OF ACTION OF THE BALTIMORE CONFERENCE IN 1845

The undersigned having been appointed on behalf of the Baltimore Annual Conference to prepare a "Pastoral Letter" to the churches within our bounds, setting forth the grounds and aims of the action of said Conference on the subject of the New Chapter on Slavery as adopted by the General Conference held at Buffalo, in May, 1860, would affectionately represent, that when in the division of the Church in 1844, this Conference adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church, it was with the understanding that the then existing status of our legislation touching slavery, was not to be disturbed. Subsequently to this, certain Annual Conferences declared by vote, that no change was desired or would be sought. Resting in this conviction and in these unsought assurances, the Baltimore Conference accepted and maintained the position to which her delegates in the General Conference committed her.

VIOLATION OF PLEDGES

These official declarations assured almost our entire membership. Contrary, however, to this understanding, and in violation of these pledges, agitation of the question, understood by general consent, and by specific declaration to be at rest, was, in a little time, commenced.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE ACTION

This agitation went on increasingly, till in the Buffalo General Conference it resulted in the passage of a New Chapter on slavery. This Chapter, enacted by an unwarranted assumption of legislative powers, has all the form and force of doctrine, "not taught in the sacred Scriptures, but contrary thereto." It gives a wrong interpretation to one of the General Rules. It destroys the organic law of the Church, by which the General Conference held its existence. It introduces a bar to the recep-

Annual Conferences to be held prior to the next session of the Annual Conference, seeing the great wrong and injury done to the Baltimore and other Border Conferences, shall disavow the act of their delegates and the action of the late General Conference on the subject of Slavery, and shall unite in a demand that the most thorough and satisfactory redress shall be given, and shall instruct their delegates so to vote in any Convention that may be called for the purpose of a more perfect union.

First, by abrogating the New Chapter.

Second, by transferring the subject of Slavery to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Annual Conferences, where it exists.

Third, that a fair proportion of the periodicals of the Church be placed under the charge and direction of said Conferences. Then and not until then, will we reunite with them in the organization of another General Conference.

3rd. Resolved, That this Conference has taken the action expressed in the above resolutions after much long suffering and reproach, to give freedom to our Preachers, in the discharge of their duties in our territory, and cannot refrain from expressing the hope that the day may speedily come when agitation and strife shall have ceased among us, and the great Methodist Family, East, West, North and South, be again united in the common effort which engaged the hearts and lives of our fathers—that of spreading Scriptural Holiness all over the land.

GUARANTEES DEMANDED

From the foregoing resolutions it will be seen that we are not only "separate and independent of the General Conference" held at Buffalo, but that we have pledged ourselves not to enter into Convention with other non-concurring Conferences for the organization of another General Conference, without the guarantees specified under the 2nd resolution.

MEMBERS EXHORTED

Believing that less than what we have done would have been recreancy to our own sense of right and duty to you, who constitute our pastoral care, may we not hope that you will accept our action in the same spirit in which it was performed, and as a further guarantee that your interests are our interests, and that they will never be betrayed or sacrificed. We are most

INTEGRAL PART OF METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

But while it declares us "separate and independent of the General Conference," and no longer under its jurisdiction, it also affords those Annual Conferences which may choose to disavow the act of the said General Conference, opportunity to recognize themselves with us as integral parts of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and place themselves upon the Discipline as re-enacted in 1856, so far as it may be applicable under our altered circumstances. Should they refuse to disavow the act of the said General Conference, in the language of our "Protest," "we shall then feel fully authorized to declare that we are the only true and legitimate branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church in these United States."

CONDITION ON WHICH BISHOPS CAN EXERCISE OVERSIGHT OF THIS CONFERENCE

The Secretary of our Conference was also directed, by a resolution, to correspond with the BISHOPS, that they may have opportunity to avow or disavow the act of the late General Conference referred to, and upon their decision depends their identity with us, or with those Annual Conferences that may differ from us, so that if separation between them and us take place, they will have voluntarily withdrawn their supervision, as we cannot submit longer to their oversight unless they disavow, as above indicated, their allegiance to the late General Conference.

ACTION OF THE CONFERENCE SET FORTH

The action of the Conference referred to above is as follows:

1st. Be it Resolved by the Baltimore Annual Conference, in Conference Assembled, That we hereby declare that the General Conference of the M. E. Church, held at Buffalo, in May, 1860, by its unconstitutional action has sundered the ecclesiastical relation which has hitherto bound us together as one Church, so far as any act of theirs could do so. That we will not longer submit to the jurisdiction of said General Conference, but hereby declare ourselves separate and independent of it, still claiming to be, notwithstanding, an integral part of the M. E. Church.

2d. Resolved, That nevertheless, if in accordance with the spirit of the foregoing preamble, three-fourths of the several

II

ACTION IN 1862

In 1862 the Conference adopted the following report on the "State of the Church":

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

"The Committee on the State of the Church, respectfully present the following report:

GRATEFUL THAT ACTION OF LAST ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOT DUE TO POLITICAL TROUBLES

In looking back to the action of the last Annual Conference, we have reason to be grateful to the Great Head of the Church for the guidance of His gracious providence through the perilous difficulties which have beset our beloved Zion. A crisis had come in the history of the Mother of Conferences. Firmly had she adhered, during a period of eighteen years, to her oft repeated pledge that "she would hold no ecclesiastical connection with any religious body making non-slaveholding a test of membership." When, in the form of a New Chapter on slavery, inserted in the Discipline by a large majority of the Buffalo General Conference, this act, unwarranted by the Holy Scriptures, and in violation of solemn pledges, was consummated, the Baltimore Conference promptly redeemed its pledges and declared that it "would no longer submit to the jurisdiction of the General Conference," and that it was "separate and independent of it." More than grateful are we now, in the midst of the perils of civil war, that political troubles prompted not that action.

CAPACITY IN WHICH WE MEET

We meet together not to assume the powers or exercise the functions which properly and only belong to an Annual Conference. We claim that, though separated by the stern circumstances of war from our brethren, both in Virginia and Maryland, we are an integral part of the Baltimore Conference. The strong ties of nearly a century cannot be easily broken.

Conference is not and will not likely be imperiled. Ministers, whose labors have so long been harmonious and so full of grateful and glorious memories, will not, and, indeed, cannot, be easily torn asunder. Allow us, in conclusion, to exhort you to cultivate peace and harmony among yourselves, and that you unite your prayers and zealous labors with ours, that God may grant us a year of fruitfulness like unto those of olden times.

MANNER OF LIFE AND DOCTRINE KNOWN

Our manner of life and doctrine among you touching the relation of master and slave, is well known to be none other than that which our Saviour and his apostles authorized in the Holy Scriptures, which we receive in this as in all other matters of religious belief, as a "rule of faith and practice."

DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER

We assure you that our great work is to preach the Gospel of the Son of God, and to labor for the salvation of sinners and the edification of believers. Exercise yourselves, therefore, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. And we effectually exhort you religiously to observe the first Friday in May, set apart by resolution of Conference, "as a day of fasting and prayer for the prosperity of Christ's cause and the success of our ministry."

"Therefore, beloved Brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Signed in behalf and by order of the Conference:

S. REGESTER
J. S. MARTIN
S. S. ROSZELL
E. R. VEITCH
W. G. EGGLESTON
N. WILSON
T. H. W. MONROE
Committee.

Staunton, Va., 1861. (Op. cit. pp. 20, 51-54).

we will exert our influence, it being understood that when, in the judgment of the Baltimore Conference, the time shall have arrived for the consummation of such a union, the General Conference of the M. E. Church, South, concurring, it will be expected that ministers of other Conferences will not hold pastoral jurisdiction within the bounds of our Conference.

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**FRATERNAL MESSENGERS TO METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH, SOUTH**

4. Resolved, That three fraternal messengers be appointed to attend the next General Conference of the M. E. Church, South, to represent our views and feelings, and to aid the furtherance of the object above specified." (Minutes 1862, pp. 28-20).

Our history is a common property, noble and precious, which even the ravages of war cannot destroy. Our hearts are still with brethren beloved, who recognize with us the action of the last Conference redeeming its pledges, and who, we believe, are yet in sympathy with us. When the hour of re-union arrives, and untrammelled and together, we can take our position, we hesitate not to express our unfaltering belief that the action of the Baltimore Conference will be found faithful to, and consistent with, its previous course. Aside from the fact that but a small proportion of our brethren even in Virginia (who constitute more than one-half of the Conference), can be present with us, the consideration that the members of our Conference in Maryland are placed under peculiar circumstances of difficulty, forbids any course of action which might embarrass them. But while we are free to confess, that in view of those facts, any action on our part, at present, fixing the relations of our Church would be improper and premature, we claim it to be our privilege and duty to give utterance to our opinions and feelings, so far as we are the representatives of the churches under our charge. Therefore,

OBEDIENCE TO THE POWERS THAT BE

1. Resolved, That in cheerful compliance with the Word of God, which enjoins obedience to the "powers that be," we claim to be good and loyal citizens of these Confederate States.

UNION WITH METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, DESIRED

2. Resolved, That prompted by a spirit of Christian love, and wishing to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace," we are willing to ignore the differences which have heretofore imposed insuperable barriers to fraternal relations between ourselves and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and we hope that the time is near at hand, when upon terms equally honorable to both parties, we may meet upon a common platform whereby we shall become one people and one Church.

WHEN UNION IS ACCOMPLISHED OUR CONFERENCE BOUNDS NOT TO BE EVADED

3. Resolved, That to effect an object so Christ-like in its nature, and so important to the general success of Methodism,

the General Conference of the M. E. Church, held at Buffalo in May, 1860, by its unconstitutional action, had sundered the ecclesiastical relations previously subsisting between the two bodies; that the jurisdiction of said General Conference would no longer be submitted to, and that we were "separate and independent of it," still claiming to be, notwithstanding, "an integral part of the M. E. Church."

A CONDITION SUBSEQUENT

There was, however, what may be termed a condition subsequent annexed to said declaration, to the effect, that, "if three-fourths of the several Annual Conferences, to be held prior to the next session of this Conference, should disavow the act of their delegates and the action of the late General Conference," and should "unite in a demand that the most thorough and satisfactory redress of the grievances alledged should be accorded" and should "instruct their delegates so to vote in any convention which might be called for the purpose of forming another union, that then, and not until then, would we consider the propriety of "uniting with them in organizing another General Conference."

CONDITION NOT MET

By said action it is clear that the former union was dissolved, not to be renewed, except upon the condition specified. The time indicated within which the Annual Conferences were to act, has long since passed away, and although this Conference has received no official notice from many of the said Conferences of their action in the premises, we feel warranted in saying, from the information in our possession, that the action demanded has not been taken, and that the condition of re-union has been defeated.

REUNION IMPOSSIBLE

The Conference, then, so far as the action of the majority is concerned, is separate and independent, and this separation and independence relates back, necessarily, to the period when the action was taken at Staunton. We scarcely deem it necessary to add here, that in the altered circumstances which now surround us, no compliance with the conditions prescribed as preliminary to a re-union could have availed anything. Such a re-

III

ACTION IN 1863

March 21, 1863, the "Conference ordered the appointment of a Committee on Church Relations, and S. Register, J. S. Martin, S. Rogers, J. S. Gardner and J. F. Ligget were appointed. On motion M. Walton, E. Geeding, P. Herring, I. Beard and J. Evans, laymen, were respectfully requested to meet and confer with the above named committee."

The Conference unanimously adopted the following report:

REPORT ON POSITION AND RELATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

"Your Committee respectfully report as follows, upon the present position and relations of the Baltimore Annual Conference:

PRESENT POSITION OF THE CONFERENCE

A repetition of former declarations of opinions and purpose in reference to questions of difference, heretofore existing between this body and the General Conference of 1860, is deemed unnecessary. They have become history—"known and read of all men." No reasons have occurred for any change in these declarations, while all that originally existed and many others subsequently developed, satisfy us of their truth and propriety, and the wisdom of their adoption. The question, however, arises, what is the present position of this Conference? What its functions? What its rights and duties? The consideration of these questions and their solution are eminently desirable, 1st, That doubts, if any exist, may be removed from the minds of the membership of this body and our people. 2d, That a clear, consistent, and well-defined course of action may be pursued at present and in the future.

CLAIMS MADE IN 1861

By reference to the protest, resolutions and other action of the majority of the Baltimore Conference, held at Staunton in 1861, it will be perceived that it was distinctly maintained that

reason of the accidents of war and other causes, are deprived of the privilege of meeting with us; when some others in Maryland, in violation of our understanding of solemn pledges, are seeking to re-connect themselves with the General Conference, from which they have been separated by the action of this Conference and their own declarations—Who constitute the Baltimore Conference? We answer, all the members of that body wherever located, who adhere to and abide by the action at Staunton in 1861; and those of that number, who meet together from time to time and receive work at our hand, constitute the active portion thereof.

WHAT THIS CONFERENCE POSSESSES

We maintain that the body thus described has an organized form, and all the elements within itself to ensure its perpetuity. This does not depend upon numbers, but upon the rights inhering in the membership as constituents in the Conference of 1861, and who are faithful to its action. As to numbers, however, we may safely claim at least two-thirds of the body as it heretofore existed.

WHAT FUNCTIONS SHOULD BE EXERCISED

How far the prerogatives of an independent body, such as has been described, should be exercised by this Conference under the peculiar circumstances which surround it, is a matter for us to decide. It is not a question of power, but of expediency and justice. We believe that all the powers and functions ought to be exercised which are necessary to the harmonious and successful working of the internal machinery of the body and the church. Beyond this, at present, we deem it improper, inexpedient, and unjust to go, because of the constrained absence of brethren beloved, whose interests and rights are to be equally promoted or prejudiced with our own. While, therefore, our opinions or sympathies, as avowed at the session of this body at Harrisonburg in 1862, have undergone no change, we regret that the circumstances which then modified and controlled our action, still exist in undiminished force. The desolations which then swept over much of Virginia and shut Maryland out from communication with us, still continue. We look forward, however, most ardently to a period, we trust not far in the future, when these difficulties will be removed, and when, in the light of com-

sult has been rendered utterly impossible by the events of the last two years, in any contingency.

PROTEST OF MINORITY

How is this separation and independence of the Conference, as declared by the majority, affected by the protest or other action of the minority?

CONDITIONS LAID DOWN BY MINORITY NOT MET

The minority agreed with the majority as to the evils, which were entailed upon us by the action of the General Conference, of May, 1860, but differed as to the mode of relief, and in that alone—they called for an extra session of the General Conference, in 1862, and for an expression of approval or disapproval, on the part of the Annual Conferences, of the terms of relief which they proposed, declaring that by the character of the response to their demands and that of their sister sympathizing Conferences, especially in slave territory, their course at the next session of this Conference would be controlled upon the question of "immediate separation." No extra General Conference was called, neither was any favorable response made by the Annual Conferences before the appointed period for the next ensuing session of this Conference in March, 1862, the period of limitation fixed for such action by the minority themselves. Nor has such action yet occurred, although another year has expired. Are we not warranted, therefore, in the conclusion, that the condition upon which they alone predicated a longer continuance of negotiation or union, has utterly failed, and that by their pledges they stand substantially upon the same ground as the majority? This, we believe, to be the truth, yet it is not necessary to maintain it, in order to vindicate our views of the character and position of this body. The action of the majority was the action of the Conference. That action, as already defined, separated and established the independence of the Baltimore Conference, and devolved upon it all the duties, rights, powers, and responsibilities appertaining to such a position. These may be defined generally to be, all that pertained to the Conference before the separation, and such, in addition, as had been previously delegated, but have now been resumed.

WHO CONSTITUTE THE BALTIMORE CONFERENCE?

The question then arises, in the present distracted condition of the country, when many brethren, in sympathy with us, by

IV.

NORVAL WILSON'S ADDRESS—1864

In 1864 Norval Wilson was elected President and delivered the following address:

"Brethren Beloved:—May grace, mercy and peace, from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, be with you. May you be imbued with the Holy Ghost, and receive power from on High. It gives me sincere pleasure to meet with you and thus cordially greet you. My heart and affections are with you.

I have ever been, in sentiment, averse to ecclesiastical disruptions; but after the General Conference of 1860, I arrived at the conviction that our further alliance with that body could only be maintained by a tame submission, involving the betrayal of the churches over which we preside.

In March, 1861, our Conference, by a large majority, severed its connection and became independent. We have remained, and are to the present time, an independent community, responsible to no superior authority, whether North or South of us.

Our present position is at once respectable and responsible. Geographically, we occupy a Valley, fertile, productive, and extensive; its soil bearing resemblance to the land which God selected for His chosen people. Also, from our central position, giving us an opportunity to wield a moral power in all directions.

Numerically, we are entitled to respect. The population of our territory is large; the Ministry of our Conference is not inconsiderable in numbers; our membership, embraced in numerous congregations where respectable and inviting church edifices have been reared, all—the proceeds of the labors of our fathers in the ministry—conspire to render this an interesting and inviting field.

I am impressed with the sentiment taken from the Bible record, that 'God loveth the gates of Zion more than all the tents of Jacob.' Civil commotions and political strifes may agitate Governments and convulse States; but these are inconsiderable matters compared with the maintenance of that Church which God has purchased with his own blood,—small, as time is when compared with eternity.

You have stood thus far, by your post of duty. Your records attest that God has stood by you. Still, let me exhort you to

mon counsels, a free and untrammelled decision shall fix our future relations in such a manner as to secure, in the largest measure practicable, our continued unity without the sacrifice of principle or any diminution of our usefulness. A time of civil war, and especially such a civil war as that which now rages in this country, is, of all the periods in the history of nations, the most unfriendly to well considered changes, either in the constitution or relationships of the church. Believing that these views protect alike the interests of the present and the absent, we need only tender to the latter, in conclusion, our warmest sympathies and prayers in the midst of their embarrassments and trials, and exhort them to "quit themselves like men and be strong," with the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God." (Minutes 1863, pp. 5, 6, 12-14).

still abide by our oft-repeated declaration of principles and rights—civil and ecclesiastical.

We deem it unnecessary to repeat, but would emphatically reaffirm, those declarations. In the language of the able report of last year, "they have become history, 'known and read of all men.'"

THE ACTION NOW NEEDED

In the practical workings of the Conference, however, there are several phases presenting themselves which, we think, demand further action:

RELATION TO BRETHREN IN MARYLAND

1. Some obtuseness of perception seems to exist as to our connection, or relation, to the so-called Baltimore Conference, held from time to time North of the Potomac.

SOME BRETHREN HAVE FORSAKEN US

2. Some of our brethren, who have heretofore met with us and received their appointments, have, in violation of the faith reposed in them, and of the order and discipline of the Church, abandoned their work and their brethren in their severe trials, and gone beyond our jurisdiction.

ORDINATIONS NEEDED

3. Much embarrassment has been experienced by our young brethren entitled to ordination, and by the people whom they serve, for want of their authority to administer the ordinances of religion.

RESPONSE TO SYMPATHY OF THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

4. The fraternal sympathy exhibited by our brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and especially of our nearest neighbor, the Virginia Conference, demands a cordial response, therefore, be it

RESOLUTIONS

AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH

1. Resolved, By the Baltimore Annual Conference, in Conference assembled, That according to the acts and process indi-

stand firm, and, if need be, suffer. God shall help you and that right early. He will give you further success as the reward of your labors, and authorize the cherished hope of an abundant recompense in the life to come.

During our sessions let us set God always before us, and aim to promote His glory. Let us suffer mortification, defeat in debate, anything, only that the Church be made to prosper by our deliberations and God be glorified.

I thank you for the honor you have done me, the confidence you have reposed in me, and ask your aid and indulgence in the discharge of the duties to which I am so unexpectedly called." (Minutes 1864, pp. 58-59).

ACTION IN 1864

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON STATE OF THE CHURCH

The Conference adopted the following on the 'State of the Church,' prepared by D. Ball, L. D. Nixon, F. C. Tebbs, S. H. Griffith and N. Wilson.

"Your Committee on the State of the Church respectfully present the following report:

GROUND FOR THANKSGIVING

After deliberate and prayerful consideration of the history and developments of the past year within our bounds, bearing upon the operations and interests of the Church, we are constrained to express our gratitude to God for the degree of prosperity and success which have attended our labors. And while we have to deplore the desolations of war among us, and the mutilation of much of our fair territory, with the consequent depression of religious interest in many localities, yet, on the other hand, we perceive great cause to thank God and take courage in the constancy, the Christian fortitude and patience of our people, and in their unity of feeling and sentiment, and their abiding fidelity to, and confidence in us their ministers.

The reports from the various sections of the Conference, present the Church in an improved condition, pecuniarily and religiously.

NO CHANGE OF POSITION

In regard to our position and relations upon the grave and momentous issues of the times there is no change to note. We

**FRATERNAL DELEGATES TO METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH, SOUTH**

6. Resolved, That the fraternal messengers appointed by this Conference two years ago, to visit the General Conference of the M. E. Church, South, be still continued as authorized, to meet that body whenever it may be convened in its next session, in the capacity and for the purposes indicated." (Op. cit. pp. 60, 65, 69-71).

cated in the report of the Committee on the State of the Church, last spring, we are a separate, distinct and independent Church within ourselves, under no foreign jurisdiction or control, and are the only legally constituted and organized representatives of the Baltimore Annual Conference, and in no wise complicated in, or responsible for, the acts of the so-called Baltimore Conference holden North of the Potomac River, and that we are wholly free from, and independent of, the jurisdiction and authority of the M. E. Church in the North.

CALL FOR UNITY IN PRESENT DISTRESS

2. Resolved, That the same embarrassing circumstances which have precluded the formation of any new Church relations in the past still existing, we earnestly exhort our people to hold to their present principles and organization, at least until these embarrassments subside and afford an opportunity to act with unity in the relations of the future.

CENSURE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FORSAKEN US

3. Resolved, That the conduct of those brethren who have left the Conference, and forsaken their people and brethren, and gone beyond our bounds and control, without satisfactory explanation, merits, and hereby receives, the emphatic censure of this Conference.

REQUEST FOR ORDINATIONS

4. Resolved, That in view of the pressing necessity for the ordination of our Deacons and Elders elect, and the recognized fraternal relations subsisting between us and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Senior Presiding Elder of this Conference be, and is hereby, instructed to communicate with the Bishops of said Church and respectfully request them, in behalf of this Conference, to ordain them, at such time and place as said Bishop, or Bishops, may designate.

FRATERNAL DELEGATE TO THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

5. Resolved, That some brother be appointed by this Conference to visit the Virginia Conference, at its next session, to express the reciprocal feelings and kindly sentiments of this Conference.

by sentiments of sincere loyalty to the Government of the United States, and to that of the States respectively, within which we may be assigned to labor, but are influenced by motives of a far higher and holier nature, such as usefulness among the people whom we serve and the best interest of the Kingdom of Christ, whose headship alone, we acknowledge in things pertaining to salvation.

DESIRE FOR FRATERNAL FELLOWSHIP WITH THOSE WHO DIFFER

3rd. Resolved, That having no unkind feelings towards brethren from whom we differ, we do hereby assure our former fellow laborers of our Christian affection and fraternal sympathy, and shall do all we can, consistently to prevent strife between them and us, and to promote good will, and brotherly kindness towards them, and do most sincerely cherish the hope that the day may speedily come when at least a hearty and universal fraternal fellowship shall be established between the two co-ordinate branches of the great Methodist Family of this Continent." (Minutes 1866, pp. 8, 9, 22).

ADDRESS IN 1866

The following Pastoral Address was adopted:

RELATION TO METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

"The Baltimore Conference has proposed ecclesiastical union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the proposal has been frankly accepted, so far as it could be, without the action of the General Conference of that great Methodist body. A Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has presided over our Conference, and from him, as one of our acknowledged Superintendents, we have cheerfully taken our appointments.

EXPLANATION NOT NEEDED BY OUR PEOPLE

An act so important would require long and detailed explanation to others; it needs little to you. You will see in it the logical conclusion of enforced circumstances, the consistent conduct of honest men, and the spiritual fruit of Christ's religion. To you this charge of relation will appear, as it is, not the beginning, but the ending of the new and unknown way by which God has been pleased to lead us away from the domina-

VI.

ACTION IN 1866

UNION WITH THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

PREAMBLE

The published Minutes of 1865 contain no report on the State of the Church.

In 1866 the Conference met February 7th-15th, in Alexandria, Virginia. The following resolutions were unanimously adopted, Thursday, February 8th:

"Whereas, The regular annual session, in the strictest sense thereof, of this Conference, were prevented for several years by the existence of civil war in the country, so that it was impossible for us, earlier to have completed the course of action inaugurated by this body at its session held in Staunton in 1861. And preferring, as we do, the connectional principle of Church Government, including Episcopacy as an element thereof, and believing any further continuance of Conference-independency, would be prejudicial to the efficient working of our itinerant system.

And Whereas the animus and practice of the M. E. Church is such as to make it improper for us to resume our submission to the jurisdiction of said Church, and the organization, doctrine and discipline of the M. E. Church, South, fully according with our own views of what constitutes a Scriptural branch of the Church of Christ, therefore,

UNION WITH METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, BISHOP EARLY TO PRESIDE

Resolved, By the Baltimore Annual Conference in Conference assembled, that in pursuance of the action of this body in 1861, we do hereby unite with and adhere to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and do now, through the President of this Conference invite Bishop Early to recognize us officially and preside over us at our present session.

OUR MOTIVES

2d. Resolved, That in taking this action, we adhere to no dead political institutions, questions or issues, being actuated

greatest of the virtues, their suffering brethren in the South are receiving cheerful and important aid. We too, look across the blood stained border, to a denomination, the largest, the wealthiest, the most liberal in gifts. Their coffers are filled with millions. They are consciously and actively a great political power, to whose demands, it is perilous for authority to demur. Of all other people we had most to expect from those who bear a common name, teach a common creed, and have formerly constituted with us, one Christian family. In the sympathies of natural kindred it has become an adage, that "blood is thicker than water." And from men of the world we expect that the ties of love shall, in the time of trouble, prove stronger than the strife of opinion. That the children of God would exhibit at least equal charity, we might reasonably have expected. But there was no charity for us, who followed not them. On the contrary our former brethren are our bitter and un pitying enemies. They indeed offer us their pottage; but for it they will have our birth-right. Their love or hate, their beneficence or hostility, are determined by our reception or rejection of their ecclesiastical supremacy.

THE TREATMENT WE RECEIVE

This demand for our subjection is not based upon any spiritual consideration. They are content that we shall remain here, and preach as we now preach, and live as we now live, and guide as we now guide. It is not a conversion of mind or heart that they require, but a cession of territory. It is not as a part of Christ's Kingdom that they approach us; but as the M. E. Church in the United States. Because we will not determine our relations simply upon consideration of their desires they have arrayed themselves, and, as far as possible, the government and nation against us, for a war avowedly of extermination. They take our churches by force, and install their ministerial agents by files of soldiers. They imperiously order our families from their homes, and bring strangers to occupy them. They extrude congregations, and force them to comfortless rooms, and to the woods and fields. Money got from well meaning piety by fervid rhetoric and well administered taxation, ostensibly to send the gospel to our people, is used to drive them away from the gospel, and to gain only a barren conquest of buildings, at the expense of a demoralized ministry and an ignominious name. Only, of all ministers in the South, we find ourselves without sympathy from our ecclesiastical kindred.

tion of politico-ecclesiastical confederations, to the liberty of church fellowship, love of the brethren, and the consciences of those to whom He would make us messengers of Salvation.

STATEMENT TO PUBLIC. PROOF OF OUR PURITY OF MOTIVE

To the public, time would fail us to give the information which they should have. But many will inquire of you, and through you we will put one argument to that common sense, which rarely fails in due time to ascertain and support the good and the true. We will ask men, who know men and the universal motives of human action, to try us by the infallible tests, by which honor and right are commonly and certainly judged. The single argument for our sincerity, is that, all the world could give us, much that it has given us, solicited to a conduct opposite to that which we have chosen. By submitting to the Northern Methodist authorities, we would have entered into as much rest, as can be enjoyed by the Demases, who forsake Jesus for the present world. Our churches would not only be secured to us, but exuberant bounty would repair them from the injuries of war, and fill them with everything necessary to worship—except the presence of the Lord. Our parsonages, from which soldiers, led on by Methodist Preachers, are extruding our wives and our little ones, would be made sure to us. Missionary money, ostensibly appropriated for the Christianization of the South, would be the gracious reward of our conversion and prostration before a Northern Bishop would be accepted as full compensation for imputed hostility to the nation. For in the long absence and uncertain return of charity, it is loyalty to a Methodist Church, that covers a multitude of sins. By union with the Northern Church, we save everything but our honor—by going to the South we save nothing else.

OUR FORMER BRETHREN

A band of ministers, who for four years have dwelt in the very vortex of a great war, have come together for the first time. They bring a common contribution of sorrowful memories and alarming facts. All are poor; many, so destitute that they have no means to reach their appointed fields of labor, except on foot. In other denominations old kindness has survived the shock of war. However violent have been the political attitudes of their ecclesiastical bodies, charity did not die; and from that

go away from the houses of God you have built, from the grave yards you have enclosed around your fondly remembered dead. You must give us as you can of the little oil and few cakes that you have. Temporarily you will be poorer for your love of us. In all the worldly respects you will find us anything but profitable. But we know you, and God knows both you and us. We solemnly and fearlessly appeal our cause to Him. With regard to temporal things, He shall think for us. We by His help will think only of things that minister to salvation. "We trust not," brethren, "in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you ward. For we write you none other things than what ye read or acknowledge and we trust you shall acknowledge even unto the end; As also ye have acknowledged us that we are your rejoicing even as ye are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus, and in this confidence we are minded to come to you." That you will receive us we know. That God will bless us, we believe. That we shall be instruments in his hands to spread scriptural holiness over these lands is our only desire and cheering anticipation. "And having this confidence," brethren, "we know that we shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for us by our coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether we come and see you, or else be absent, we may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in us and now hear to be in us."

EXHORTATION TO HUMILITY AND TRUST

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye

OUR CALL TO A FELLOWSHIP OF SUFFERING

On the other hand, the Church South, has no material benefit to give us. They are, as we are, very poor! A partnership with them is a communion of distress, a fellowship of suffering. Now we ask men to explain our conduct, upon any other principle than those whose inspiration come, from the things that are invisible and external. The reply of course will be, that political sympathies determined us. But the accusation is false. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is in this respect, a noble monument of Christian consistency. Neither her General Conference, or her Annual Conferences, nor her Bishops have presumed in the name of God to cheer on resistance to the Federal Union. Not one word of that Church has committed her as a party to a merely secular strife. It was her aim to hold up the Cross in the midst of the war of human passions—to keep a living coal on the altar of God amidst the very floods of revolutionary deluge, and to exalt the crown of Christ, the higher, as popular idols were lifted up. This we also, in our lot, ever essayed to do.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD

We believe that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. Evil and only evil has ever come from every ecclesiastical departure from this fundamental truth. We believe that from this truth, nevertheless, the Northern Church has gone away, the Southern Church has not. We believe that one is on the way to secularization, the other to spirituality and usefulness.

ALL ARE HERE TO SHARE YOUR POVERTY, AND TO REJOICE IN RICHES OF GRACE

We believe that one is expecting a mixed success from money and material force—the other comes out of the wilderness leaning only on Christ, and her eye is single. Men whose work is to know only Jesus, to preach only Jesus, to count all things but loss for His name cannot hesitate which of the two proffered associations to accept. We have made our choice with a unanimity, which of itself, is a demonstration of its propriety. And now we come to you. Will you receive us as before in your confidence and love? We are all coming. Scarcely a man has withdrawn to secular employment; a fact as surprising to us as to you. We are coming to take our wonted places as your preachers and pastors. Perhaps when you receive us, you must

C. Dice. (Op. cit. pp. 41-43). Since the Presiding Elders were not appointed till the close of the Conference, and the Pastoral Address was adopted on Thursday morning, February 15, it is more probable that those first mentioned were the ones appointed.

have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be Glory and Dominion forever and ever. Amen.

EXHORTATION TO SEEK PEACE

Finally, brethren, we exhort "you to study to be quiet, and to do your own business," abstaining from all controversy and strife, believing that "in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Maintain a stedfast adherence to the economy and usages of the church, as transmitted to us by our Fathers, and embodied in our Book of Discipline.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY PIETY

Procure good and useful books for the instruction of yourselves and your families. Train your children carefully, by means of Sabbath Schools and otherwise, that in due time they may become pillars in the temple of our God. Prayerfully study the Holy Scriptures, and devoutly attend upon the Ministry of the Word. Withal make it a matter of conscience to supply the wants of those preachers who are appointed to labor in your midst. We be brethren. Let the connectional principle be maintained. Thereby shall we mutually aid one another, and promote the interests of our common Christianity.

BENEDICTION

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do this will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to him be glory forever and ever. Amen."

This address, by order of the Conference, was prepared by a committee consisting of the Presiding Elders, (S. Regester, S. H. Griffith, E. R. Veitch, J. S. Martin, J. S. Gardner, W. G. Eggleston, S. S. Roszel), D. Thomas, with Norval Wilson as Chairman. (Minutes 1866, pp. 13, 20).

The Presiding Elders mentioned in the resolution may have been those appointed at the Conference of 1866. If that be the case they were S. Regester, J. S. Martin, Eldridge R. Veitch, Ezra F. Busey, James S. Gardner, J. Hoffman Waugh, John

